

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 200 844

CG 015 076

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TITLE The Effects of Managerial Succession on Organizational Performance.
INSTITUTION Army Research Inst. for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, Alexandria, Va.
PUB DATE Sep 80
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (88th, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, September 1-5, 1980).
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Change; Administrator Role; *Administrators; Armed Forces; *Change Strategies; Evaluation Criteria; *Leadership; *Military Personnel; Organizational Change; *Performance Factors; Personnel Management

ABSTRACT

The process by which managers come and go in large organizations is thought to have significant effects on organizational performance. To investigate the effects of managerial succession on organizational performance, measures of organizational performance were collected from 60 Army battalions and analyzed according to how closely each measurement followed changes in battalion command. None of the battalion effectiveness ratings and only one of the 16 performance measures revealed a significant effect of proximity to command transition. Results suggest that managerial succession does not in itself have a deleterious effect on organizational performance in the Army. (Although the study focuses on a military setting, results are of importance in the area of organizational performance.) (Author/KMF)

ED200844

THE EFFECTS OF MANAGERIAL SUCCESSION ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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Paper Presented at Meeting of American Psychological Association
Montreal, September 1980

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate the effects of managerial succession on organizational performance. Measures of organizational performance were collected from sixty Army battalions and were analyzed according to how closely each measurement followed a change of battalion command. On none of the battalion effectiveness ratings and on only one of the sixteen performance measures was there a significant effect of proximity to command transition, thus leading to the conclusion that managerial succession does not in itself have a deleterious effect on organizational performance in the Army.

THE EFFECTS OF MANAGERIAL SUCCESSION ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

The process by which managers come and go in large organizations is thought to have significant effects on organizational performance. Since large organizations frequently experience changes in management, sometimes with quite disruptive results (Christensen, 1953; Gouldner, 1954; Grusky, 1959), it is important to know and understand exactly what these effects are. As Grusky noted:

"The universality of succession in formal organizations and the tendency of the process to promote instability combine to make this phenomenon of crucial importance to organizational theory." (Grusky, 1960:115).

Despite such statements by Grusky and others attesting to the necessity for research in this area, very little literature exists which focuses its specific attention on the relationship between managerial succession and organizational performance. Twenty years after Gouldner's (1954) classic case study of the effects of managerial succession in a gypsum plant, Champion could still write that

"Today, the 'theory of managerial succession' remains in its infancy. Relatively little is yet known about succession or its consequences and what is known seems only tenuous and inconclusive." (Champion, 1973a:2).

Though more research has been done in this area since 1973, Champion's remarks still hold true today.

Most of the research on administrative succession to date has dealt not only with the disruptive effect of succession per se, but also with the effect of varying rates of succession on organizational effectiveness and commitment to the organization. A number of conflicting theories have been developed in each of these areas.

In 1954, Gouldner published his pioneering case study of the organizational culture and social system which existed in a gypsum plant both before and after the succession of a new plant manager. When the plant manager died unexpectedly, the company filled the vacancy with an "outsider" and charged the successor with the responsibility for improving productivity. Gouldner discussed the resentment of plant workers that followed the appointment of a punishment-oriented successor (Guest, 1962) as well as the impact of increased bureaucratization and the "strategic replacement" of subordinates by the new manager on organizational effectiveness. The end result of succession in this case was a wild-cat strike. This led Gouldner to conclude that succession could not take place without a disruption of managerial processes within the organization and, consequently, a reduction in the level of productivity.

This conclusion was supported by Grusky's (1959) study of succession in an experimental prison camp. Immediately after a new supervisor took over, the prison equilibrium was shattered--role conflict developed, more property damage was reported, and the rate of inmate transfers and escapes increased substantially.

In one of the first attempts to devise a comprehensive "theory of managerial succession," Grusky (1960) formulated sets of propositions relating the process of succession to key characteristics of the whole organizational structure and to small group variables which impinge on the successor's role. He based his observations on his own research as well as the work of Gouldner (1954), Whyte (1949), and others. One of the conclusions which Grusky reached was that while the amount of instability in an organization due to succession varies, "administrative succession always leads to organizational instability." (Grusky, 1960:105).

In 1960, Trow performed a laboratory experiment, using undergraduate women, to test the relationship between succession and organizational effectiveness. The time required by groups with varying rates of succession to perform a "task" was compared with the time for a group with no succession. Trow found that average performance improved with each repetition, but groups were less likely to improve their performance immediately after a succession. He further noted that disruption was less likely to occur at all when the successor had a high level of ability (cf. Whyte, 1949:304).

Kotin and Sharaf (1967) also found a negative relationship between succession and organizational effectiveness in their study at Eastern State Hospital. When the hospital superintendent was succeeded, a polarization of personnel occurred around organization goals. In a subsequent study (Sharaf and Kotin, 1974), they found that polarization also occurred, though to a lesser degree, when the successor of the first study was in turn replaced.

Guest (1962), on the other hand, found that organizational productivity increased after a managerial change in a large automobile plant. The consequences of succession in this case were beneficial both for the social system and for organizational performance. Guest attempted to reconcile the difference between his findings and those of Gouldner by focusing on the different leadership styles used by successors in each case and the different social system each successor inherited. He concluded that disruption of the organization was less likely when management style shifts from a punishment-centered style to a representative approach to management.

In a case study of succession in a garment manufacturing factory, Koch (1978) also found that productivity increased when a new manager took over.

The predecessor manager had used an informal leadership style similar to that used by the predecessor in Gouldner's gypsum plant. Productivity increased after the succession, however, despite the fact that the successor instituted a more bureaucratic structure. While the organizational environment was very similar to that found in Gouldner's gypsum plant, the positive results of the succession were much closer to those of Guest (1962). It should be noted that Koch surveyed plant supervisors five months after the successor took over, so the immediate effects of the succession on organizational performance are not known. Also, succession did lead to a disruption of managerial processes, in so far as supervisors had less direct control of plant operations under the new manager, but it is important to note that despite this, there was no decline in productivity as hypothesized by Gouldner (1954) and Grusky (1959; 1960).

The rate of managerial succession has been viewed as an independent issue by several researchers. Many of the theories about the effect of rate of succession on organizational effectiveness grew out of the study of professional sport teams. These have consistently been selected as units of analysis in the research since these organizations are highly comparable in internal structure, size, goals, and natural environment, thus enabling the researcher to hold constant many of the important variables affecting organizational performance (Grusky, 1963; Gamson and Scotch, 1964; Theberge and Loy, 1976). Yet considerable ambiguity remains over the relative adequacy of the existing theories, despite the contributions of several researchers (Allen, Panian, and Lotz, 1979; Champion, 1973a).

Grusky (1963) studied the rate of managerial succession and its effects in 16 professional baseball teams between 1921-41 and 1951-58. He found that a negative correlation existed between the rate of managerial succession and team performance and between a change in the rate of succession and change in organizational effectiveness. Grusky arrived at this conclusion by comparing the season win/loss record of each team and the average length of managerial tenure during each of the two periods. Grusky proposed two hypotheses for this relationship. The first, the "common-sense one-way causality" theory, holds that the manager is fired because the team performs poorly. The second theory, the "vicious circle two-way causality" theory, which Grusky accepted, asserts that poor performance leads to a change in managers which, in turn, leads to deterioration in team morale and performance and to another managerial change.

Gamson and Scotch (1964) attempted to validate Grusky's 1963 study using a larger sample of managerial changes. They found some support for both of Grusky's hypotheses and for a third theory, the "ritual scapegoating" theory. This third theory, which they chose to accept, states that a change in managers has little effect on team performance. Firing the manager "is a convenient, anxiety-reducing act which the participants in the ceremony regard as a way of improving performance, even though...real improvement can come only through long-range organizational decisions." (Gamson & Scotch, 1964:70-1).

In 1972, Eitzen and Yetman published a study of managerial change in 129 NCAA basketball teams. They found that a significant negative correlation, though much lower than that found by Grusky (1963), existed between rate of succession and organizational effectiveness. However, when the team's

previous win/loss record was controlled, a change in coaches was shown to make no systematic difference in team effectiveness.

One of the most recent studies on the effect of rate of succession (Allen, Panian, and Lotz, 1979) examined all managerial changes for all major league baseball teams between 1920 and 1973. They found that most of team performance after succession can be explained by pre-succession performance (cf. Lieberman and O'Connor, 1972). The rate of managerial succession was shown to have only a marginally significant negative effect on post-succession performance.

The early theoretical framework of managerial succession was constructed from relatively sparse information and from a relatively limited number of contributors to the subject. Further, these studies have suggested that the area of managerial succession is confounded by conceptually distinct issues, for example, the effect of rates of succession, the process of succession, the type of organization studied, leadership styles, and the organizational commitment of managers and personnel. Yet another problem has been the use of different definitions for such key terms as "succession," "rate of succession," "manager," and "effectiveness."

The optimal solution for studying the problem is to examine only one of these areas while controlling for as many of the remaining areas as possible. This study focuses on the process of managerial succession and its effect on organizational performance in Army battalions.* In so doing, the issue of succession's effect will be viewed as theoretically and empirically distinct from other related issues (e.g. rate of succession).

*A battalion is a functional element of the Army organization and consists of approximately 1000 individuals.

With the exception of three studies (Grusky, 1964a; Champion, 1973b; Bennet and Childress, 1974), the effect of managerial succession on organizational performance and the testing of the existing theories has not been explored in a military context. Further, these articles have not focused on the process of managerial succession but rather have dealt with such related issues as rates of succession, organizational commitment and identification, and perceived personal executive authority.

The military is a valuable unit of analysis for research on managerial succession, for, like sport teams, military units have similar organizational structures, are similar in size and in technological resources, share common goals, conform to mutual norms, and are structurally stable (cf. Theberge and Loy, 1976). Military units have the added advantage of being more similar to large, bureaucratic organizations than sport teams, where informal structures are more important as a means of control rather than the formal, hierarchical structures generally found in large corporations. The results of military studies can, therefore, be more easily generalized to the population of large organizations. Grusky points out that military units represent a "relatively extreme career situation" and that the military "has reached a stage of bureaucratic development which seemingly anticipates the future movement of other complex systems" (Grusky, 1964a.439).

The present study seeks to extend the research on this issue from the study of industry and athletic teams to an examination of managerial succession in a military context. Specifically, the purpose of this research is to assess the nature, extent and duration of the effect of battalion command

transition upon continued battalion performance. It is anticipated that battalion performance will show a decrement in the period immediately following the change of battalion command. It is further anticipated that as new commanders gain in experience, this performance decrement will gradually disappear.

METHOD

Organizational performance data were collected from approximately 60 Army battalions located in the continental United States between May and November 1978. The performance measures that were taken on these battalions can be classified into three groups: readiness measures, command indicators and direct ratings of battalion effectiveness.

Since all Army battalions have the peacetime mission of maintaining combat readiness, the most direct measure of a battalion's effectiveness is the degree to which this goal is realized. Such information is routinely reported by each battalion in its monthly Unit Status Report. This report contains a rating of the battalion's overall readiness and supporting ratings of various facets of readiness. These ratings are made on a five-point scale with the operational definition of each scale point for each of the ratings specified in Army regulations. A listing and definition of each of the measures culled from the battalion's Unit Status Report can be found in Figure 1.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Command indicators are those measures which are traditionally held to reflect a unit's state of morale and discipline. The specific command indicators used for this study are listed and defined in Figure 2. As with the readiness measures, the command indicator measures were extracted from unit records and reports.

INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

Each battalion's scores on each of the monthly measures (the readiness measures and command indicators) were first averaged into quarterly figures to enhance reliability. Each measurement was then indexed to indicate the number of months that the measurement followed a command transition, that is, the number of months that the battalion commander had been in his position at the time the particular measurement was taken. In the case of quarterly data, the mid-month of the quarter was used as the reference point in computing this index. This measure of temporal proximity to command transition ranged from 1 to 22 months, with the bulk of the observations falling into the 1 to 15 month range. (See Table 1). Owing to the relatively few observations falling into the 16 to 22 month range, only the data occurring within 15 months of transition were included in the analyses.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Official measures of unit performance tend to be narrowly defined and to be focused on discrete facets of organizational performance. Looking only at these measures might fail to provide a fully inclusive and integrated depiction of each battalion's effectiveness. Such a depiction could best be obtained from those individuals who were in the battalions or continually interacted with them and who were accordingly familiar with the quality of their day-to-day operations. Therefore, judgments of battalion effectiveness were obtained from individuals within each battalion and from those in the chain of command above each battalion. It was felt that judgments gleaned from such a broad range of individuals would provide a balance of perspectives and orientations. Two methods of data collection were employed in obtaining these measures: the estimates of battalion effectiveness by battalion personnel were obtained through a survey while the estimates by those above the battalions in the chain of command were obtained through individual interviews.

The survey measure of battalion effectiveness consisted of a three-item scale (see Figure 3) which was embedded in a larger organizational climate questionnaire administered to a ten percent representative sample of battalion personnel. A scale score was computed for each subject by averaging across the three items. These scale scores were in turn aggregated by military rank group within each battalion, producing an average scale score for noncommissioned officers and officers for each battalion.*

INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

Interviews were conducted with the brigade commander (one echelon above the battalions in the chain of command), the assistant division commander (two echelons above the battalions in the chain of command), and the division commander (three echelons above the battalion in the chain of command) to obtain estimates of the performance of the battalions involved in this study. Each interviewee was first asked to assign a letter grade (ranging from A+ to F) to the performance of each of the study's battalions that were under his command. These letter grades were converted to a 13-point scale with F equal to 1 and A+ equal to 13. Each interviewee was then asked to rank the performance of each of the participating battalions with regard to that of all battalions under the interviewee's command. After they had been converted to standard scores, the rating and the ranking assigned to each participating battalion by each of the raters were averaged to produce a single brigade commander evaluation, a single assistant division commander evaluation, and a single division commander evaluation of the performance of each of the participating battalions.

*Service members (junior enlisted personnel) were queried on the issue of company effectiveness only.

Figure 1

READINESS MEASURES

OVERALL READINESS

A battalion's overall readiness status as reported in the monthly Unit Status Report.

PERSONNEL READINESS

A battalion's personnel readiness status as reported in the monthly Unit Status Report.

EQUIPMENT ON HAND

An index of the degree to which a battalion possesses all authorized equipment, a reflection of the battalion's supply system.

EQUIPMENT SERVICEABILITY

The status of the equipment which a battalion has on hand, a reflection of the battalion's maintenance system.

TRAINING READINESS

The estimate of the degree to which the battalion's personnel possess the requisite knowledge to perform their combat mission.

Figure 2

COMMAND INDICATORS

EDP	The percentage of enlisted personnel given expeditious discharges during a given month.
ADVERSE	The percentage of enlisted personnel given adverse discharges during a given month.
ARTICLES 15	The percentage of enlisted personnel administered non-judicial punishment (e.g., fines, reductions in grade) during a given month.
COURTS MARTIAL	The percentage of enlisted personnel receiving a court martial during a given month.
AWOL	The percentage of enlisted personnel who were involved in unexcused absences during a given month.
DESERTIONS	The percentage of enlisted personnel who deserted during a given month.
FIRST TERM RE-UP	The percentage of a battalion's first-term reenlistment objective that was achieved in a given month.
CAREER RE-UP	The percentage of a battalion's reenlistment objective for career personnel that was achieved in a given month.
CRIMES OF VIOLENCE	The percentage of a battalion's enlisted strength involved in crimes of violence in a given month.
PROPERTY CRIMES	The percentage of a battalion's enlisted strength involved in crimes against property in a given month.
DRUG ARRESTS	The percentage of a battalion's enlisted strength arrested for drug and marijuana violations in a given month.

Table 1

Number of Observations as a Function of Proximity to
Command Transition

<u>Number of Months Since Transition</u>	<u>Number of Observations</u>
1	20
2	13
3	12
4	21
5	19
6	14
7	17
8	11
9	8
10	20
11	16
12	9
13	8
14	5
15	5
16	4
17	1
18	2
19	3
20	1
21	0
22	<u>1</u>
Total	210

Figure 3

ITEMS USED IN COMPUTING BATTALION EFFECTIVENESS SCALE

1. What is your evaluation of the overall work effectiveness of your battalion?

- A. Not effective
- B. Slightly effective
- C. Effective
- D. Very effective
- E. Extremely effective

2. Compared to all other units that you have ever served in, how effective is your battalion?

A-----B-----C-----D-----E

Least Effective

Most Effective

3. How many improvements would it take to make this unit the most effective battalion that you have ever served in?

- A. Many improvements are needed.
- B. Quite a few improvements are needed.
- C. Few improvements are needed.
- D. Very few improvements are needed.
- E. No improvements are needed.

RESULTS

A one-way analysis of variance was performed on each of the previously described measures to examine the level of performance in that area as a function of proximity to command transition. The results of these analyses are displayed in Table 2. As shown, of the 16 performance measures, on only one (Personnel Readiness) was there a significant effect of proximity to command transition. Such a proportion of significant results, of course, is almost indistinguishable from a chance occurrence. Indeed, examination of the means underlying this effect revealed Personnel Readiness to be, if anything, more positive immediately after command transition than subsequently.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

A one-way analysis of variance was also performed on each of the battalion effectiveness ratings to evaluate perceived battalion performance as a function of proximity to command transition. The results of these analyses are displayed in Table 3. None of the effectiveness ratings shows a significant effect of proximity to command transition.

In sum, the results of these analyses indicate that command transition had no effect upon battalion performance.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Table 2

ANOVA Results for Analyses Examining Effects of Command Transition
on Battalion Performance Measures

Performance Measure	F	df	p (F)
<u>READINESS MEASURES:</u>			
OVERALL READINESS	1.65	12,156	n.s.
PERSONNEL READINESS	1.84	12,155	.05
EQUIPMENT ON HAND	.84	12,155	n.s.
EQUIPMENT SERVICEABILITY	.47	12,156	n.s.
TRAINING READINESS	1.53	12,156	n.s.
<u>COMMAND INDICATORS:</u>			
EDP	1.17	12,147	n.s.
ADVERSE	.68	12,149	n.s.
ARTICLES 15	.57	12,141	n.s.
COURTS MARTIAL	.80	12,141	n.s.
AWOL	1.22	12,140	n.s.
DESERTIONS	.74	12,138	n.s.
FIRST TERM RE-UP	1.73	12,139	n.s.
CAREER RE-UP	.63	12,145	n.s.
CRIMES OF VIOLENCE	1.75	12,137	n.s.
PROPERTY CRIMES	.85	12,140	n.s.
DRUG ARRESTS	.81	12,136	n.s.

n.s. = non-significant

Table 3

ANOVA Results for Analyses Examining Effects of Command Transition
on Battalion Effectiveness Ratings

Effectiveness Ratings	F	df	p (F)
DIVISION COMMANDER	.20	5,57	n.s.
ASSISTANT DIVISION COMMANDER	.31	5,58	n.s.
BRIGADE COMMANDER	.47	5,67	n.s.
BATTALION OFFICERS	.56	2,29	n.s.
BATTALION NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICERS	.10	2,32	n.s.

n.s. = non-significant

DISCUSSION

No effect of managerial succession could be found across the many facets of organizational performance reflected in this study's measures. This finding supports neither the hypothesis of the present study nor the findings of previous studies (e.g., Gouldner, 1954; Grusky, 1959). A number of factors, some of which may explain the different findings, distinguish this study from earlier ones on the process of succession.

The most important differences concern the varying degrees of bureaucratization found in each organization and the varying organizational goals of the successors. Although most of the earlier studies on the process of succession examined bureaucratic organizations (mainly industry), none of these organizations approached the high level of bureaucracy found in the Army battalion. This elevated level of bureaucratization in the Army is evidenced by its high degree of centralization and standardization of roles and procedures. Gouldner (1954) and Grusky (1959) found that disruption was most likely to occur when succession led from an informal to a more bureaucratic organizational structure. The bureaucratic nature of Army battalions may very well explain why no organizational disruption was noted when new battalion commanders were appointed. One of the distinguishing characteristics of a bureaucracy is its stability (Weber (Matteson and Ivancevich, 1977:37)). Changes in administrative personnel have little effect on the output of the bureaucracy. As Weber noted, "the professional bureaucrat...is only a single cog in an ever-moving mechanism which prescribes to him an essentially fixed route of march" (Weber (Grusky and Miller, 1970: 17)). The small impact a manager has on organizational performance has, in fact, been noted (Allen, Panian, and Lotz,

1979; Lieberman and O'Connor, 1972). In the Army, there is little that the battalion commander can change when he assumes command; the subordinate officers, or lower level bureaucrats, continue to carry out their duties as usual. This bureaucratic nature of the battalion ensures the continuity of operations and, consequently, the lack of a disruptive effect as a result of administrative succession.

Further, within the context of the organizational structure, there appears to be an effect on performance related to maintaining the continuity of organizational goals. With the exception of Trow (1960), each of the successors studied in earlier research attempted to change some aspect of the organization. Successors in the experimental, medium security prison (Grusky, 1959), Eastern State Hospital (Kotin and Sharaf, 1967), and the garment manufacturing company (Koch, 1978), attempted to change the goal orientation of their respective organizations. A number of methods were used to bring about change: the adoption of a more bureaucratic structure, the introduction of new staff with new ideas, and the lessening of bureaucratic structures. However, when a new battalion commander is appointed, the organizational goal of maintaining a certain level of combat readiness remains unchanged. Part of the disruptive effect resulting from succession in the earlier studies can be attributed to the institution of new organizational goals by the successor. The absence of this factor from battalion command successions provides the battalion with a greater degree of organizational continuity across succession which may partially explain the lack of disruption found in this study.

Therefore, the structure and the goals of the organization play an important part in the degree of impact managerial succession can have on the performance of the organization. Individually and in combination, these two

factors have been shown to have varying effects, with the least impact on performance existing when the organization is highly bureaucratized and the successor maintains the continuity of organizational goals.

Just as the results of the earlier case studies of managerial succession were colored by the organizational conditions under which they occurred, so too did there exist in the present study a universal condition that quite probably influenced the results. As previously noted, the Army policy during the period of data collection held battalion commander tenure to approximately 18 months in duration. The data for the present study contained no battalion whose commander had held his position for longer than 22 months. The vast majority of the command successions observed in this study were planned and foreseen long in advance of their actual occurrence. Army commanders assume their position with the knowledge that their tenure will not greatly exceed 18 months. Hence, the goals they set for themselves and for their units are consistent with this knowledge. They will not, for example, initiate plans or programs that would logically extend beyond 18 months unless provisions are made to insure that such plans or programs will be uninfluenced by the change of command that will occur at that time. Likewise, when the command transition does occur, it is neither unanticipated nor on short notice. This makes the effect of the transition less significant than if it occurred at random and without notice.

In the case studies previously cited, rate of succession was not a considered factor. In the studies on sports teams, a high rate of succession was found to have a negative impact on performance. Yet, succession in the sport team studies occurred when team performance was low. A high rate of succession, therefore, was not a constant phenomenon of any sport team but rather was an indicator of continued poor performance.

Hence, routinization of succession can enhance organizational effectiveness by allowing the organization to adjust to systematic changes and to prepare for succession. In a study of large and small corporations listed in Fortune 500, Grusky presented several hypotheses about the effect of succession in large, bureaucratic organizations. He suggested that:

Bureaucratization should serve to nullify, or at least cushion, the otherwise disruptive consequences of succession [A] highly bureaucratized system, staffed with professional managers, is likely to routinize the succession process by establishing rules which regulate retirement, rotation, and promotion of officials (Grusky, 1961:266).

Succession occurs in Army battalions as a matter of course, rather than as a positive reinforcement of organizational behavior (Helmich, 1975) or as an attempt to change the organizational culture (e.g. Gouldner, 1954; Grusky, 1959; Kotin and Sharaf, 1972). Therefore, routinization allows the battalion to anticipate and prepare for transition.

The importance of knowing the succession cycle of an organization is also seen in Trow's conclusion that disruption "may be less the result of succession per se than a function of (a) the degree to which the organization is unaccustomed to it and unprepared for it, and (b) the lack of relevant administrative abilities in the successors" (Trow, 1960:267). The importance of preparing for succession was also noted by Christensen (1953) in his study of small businesses. The routine replacement of battalion commanders permits the battalion and the organization as a whole to become accustomed to succession as well as to prepare for succession. The high degree of standardization of roles, operating procedures, and experiences in the military has resulted in a fairly homogeneous officer class (Grusky, 1964b). This organizational characteristic serves to provide unit operations a degree of protection from combat losses by insuring that qualified leaders will always be available to assume command. To no less a degree does this standardization

and formalization serve to provide continuity of operations in the face of more orderly personnel turbulence in times of peace.

The findings of the present research have served to functionally distinguish the direct effects of managerial succession from the effects of the rate of succession. By virtue of Army policy, the direct effects of managerial succession in this study were observed while the frequency of successions was held relatively high and constant. It remains to be seen whether managerial succession continues to have no consistent effects on organizational performance at other or at variable rates of succession. Further, the possibility that the effects of succession are situationally determined raises the question of which situational variables impact on an organization's performance during transition. A more practical issue concerns the best way to manage succession in order to maximize the advantages provided to and limit the costs incurred by the organization. Such issues can be empirically addressed only through the further examination of the dynamics of managerial succession in a wider variety of organizational settings. A loss in the strict comparability of findings would be balanced by the greater richness of information available from this research. In this way a more complete depiction of the interplay between managerial succession, its rate, and broader organizational dynamics could be achieved.

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